

Submission Against the Hillview Hard Rock Quarry Project (SSD-70557215)

Location: 67 Maytoms Lane, Booral

Applicant: Coastwide Materials Pty. Limited

Council Area: Mid-Coast

To the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure,

I write to submit my **strong and unequivocal objection** to the proposed Hillview Hard Rock Quarry Project (SSD-70557215), currently on public exhibition. This development poses a direct and unacceptable threat to the health, safety, and environment of the Mid-Coast region.

1. Proximity to Homes and a School - Health Risk from Silica Dust

The quarry is proposed in close proximity to a local school and many homes. This is not just concerning – it is **irresponsible and dangerous**. The project involves the extraction and processing of up to 1.5 million tonnes of **hard rock** per year for **up to 30 years**, creating airborne **crystalline silica dust**, a **Group 1 carcinogen** according to the World Health Organisation.

Exposure to respirable silica dust is directly linked to **silicosis, lung cancer, chronic bronchitis, and other life-limiting respiratory diseases**. This is not a theoretical risk. The Australian government has **recently banned the use of engineered stone** for kitchen benchtops specifically due to the proven dangers of silica exposure. If silica dust is too dangerous for controlled indoor use, how can it be acceptable to **release it into the open air, uncontrolled, near schools and homes?**

The government and health agencies are already aware of these dangers. Failing to protect children and residents in this case would be a **deliberate and negligent act**, prioritising the profit of a private corporation over public health.

2. Environmental Destruction and Impact on Local Biodiversity

The proposed site is a **beautiful and ecologically significant area**, home to a wide range of **native wildlife including koalas, birds, and other threatened species**. Koala populations in NSW are already under immense pressure due to habitat loss, disease, and climate stress. This project would result in the **destruction of vital habitat**, increased vehicle strikes from truck traffic, and further fragmentation of the already diminished ecosystems in the Mid-Coast region.

The Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) lists this proposal as a **“controlled action”** because of potential impacts on listed threatened species and communities. That alone should give decision-makers pause. The ecological cost is irreversible. Once this habitat is gone, it's gone forever.

3. River and Water Table Concerns

The quarry operations raise serious concerns about the potential impact on the **local river systems and groundwater**. Hard rock quarrying can alter surface water flow, degrade water quality, and reduce the availability of clean water for both human and agricultural use. Silting, chemical runoff, and contamination are well-documented risks of such projects.

These environmental risks must be critically examined – especially in light of increasing regional drought conditions. We cannot afford to damage or pollute local water systems, which support farms, native ecosystems, and the broader community.

4. Road Safety and Traffic Chaos on The Bucketts Way

The proposal includes **over 200 heavy truck movements PER DAY**, using roads that are already among **the most poorly maintained in the state** – particularly **The Bucketts Way** and its adjoining access routes. These roads are **narrow, winding, degraded**, and already known for **frequent serious accidents**. Over a 5-year period, there were **over 700 major crashes and several fatalities** on The Bucketts Way alone.

This road has had **known black spots for decades**, and despite repeated government announcements of funding, very little real improvement has occurred. Adding 200+ quarry trucks daily is not just irresponsible – it will **inevitably lead to more injuries and deaths**.

The road is also part of a **tourist route**, frequently used by people unfamiliar with local conditions. Increasing industrial traffic through this corridor dramatically heightens the risk to both residents and visitors alike. The road network in its current form is **not equipped for this level of industrial demand**.

5. Lack of Adequate Infrastructure and Oversight

The existing infrastructure in the region is **not designed to support an industrial operation of this magnitude**. There is no justification for burdening a rural area with a massive quarry when the risks are this high and the benefits are so unequally distributed.

If the state cannot adequately maintain existing roads, how can it possibly ensure long-term enforcement of environmental protections, noise, dust, and traffic conditions over a 30-year period?

6. Cumulative Impact and Community Wellbeing

Beyond the measurable environmental and safety issues, this project threatens the **character, liveability, and wellbeing** of the surrounding community. This region is treasured for its **natural beauty, tranquillity, and wildlife** – qualities that will be lost to the noise, dust, traffic, and industrial disruption that this project will bring.

The quarry will impact **mental health, property values, local tourism, and community cohesion**. These factors matter. We should not trade community wellbeing and natural heritage for the short-term profits of a single corporation.

Conclusion

I strongly urge the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to **reject the Hillview Hard Rock Quarry Project**. The **risks to public health, wildlife, road safety, and local amenity are unacceptable** and cannot be mitigated by promises of regulation or rehabilitation.

If this project proceeds, it will demonstrate that NSW planning policy values corporate interests over:

- The **lungs of our children**,

- The **lives of road users**,
- The **survival of iconic native wildlife**, and
- The **safety and wellbeing of regional communities**.

The decision should be simple and clear. **Reject this quarry. Protect the people, the wildlife, and the land.**

Sincerely,

Michael Danvers

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